

Indian treaties

The practice of concluding treaties with the American Indians was initiated in the colonial period by the British, who employed them especially after the British victory in the French and Indian War (1754-63). During the American Revolution, the U.S. government adopted the treaty system, signing its first treaty with the Delawares in 1778.

The major purposes of such treaties were to obtain land cessions from the tribes, to determine boundaries between Indian and white lands, and to regulate trade. By adopting the treaty system, the British and U.S. governments recognized the prior ownership of land by Indian tribes and in effect also acknowledged their strength and their status as independent nations. The most important of the early treaties were those of Fort Stanwix (1768 and 1784), by which the IROQUOIS LEAGUE ceded rights in the trans-Appalachian country, and the Treaty of Greenville (1795), by which 12 northern tribes surrendered the southeastern corner of the NORTHWEST TERRITORY to the United States.

By 1815 most of the Indians north of the Ohio River had been subdued, and sentiment was strong to force all Indians to settle west of the Mississippi River. Although treaties to effect this end were formally negotiated, coercion, bribery, and the use of alcohol became commonplace in wringing favorable terms from reluctant tribal leaders. In the case of the Cherokee Nation v. The State of Georgia (1831), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Indians were no longer to be regarded as independent nations but rather as "dependent domestic nations," subject to regulation by the federal government. From that time until 1871 treaties became mere formalities in which terms were usually dictated by the government. Congress frequently enacted laws conflicting with the provisions of Indian treaties, and the whites frequently violated their terms, thus provoking many of the INDIAN WARS of the 19th century.

In 1871 the use of treaties was terminated by Congress, and Indians were thereafter governed by congressional legislation, executive orders, or executive agreements. On Aug. 13, 1946, Congress created the Indian Claims Commission to adjudicate Indian land claims. The I.C.C. existed until 1978, after which claims were handled first by the Court of Claims and, after 1982 by the U.S. Claims Court. By 1989, claims totaling nearly \$1.4 billion had been awarded.

Lawrence C. Kelly

Bibliography: Deloria, Vine, *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties* (1974; repr. 1985) and *The Nations Within* (1984); Jones, Dorothy V., *License for Empire* (1982); Kappler, Charles J., ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 5 vols. (1941; repr. 1977); Parker, L.S., *Native American Estate* (1989); Prucha, Francis, P., *The Great Father*, 2 vols. (1984) and, as ed., *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, 2d ed. (1990).

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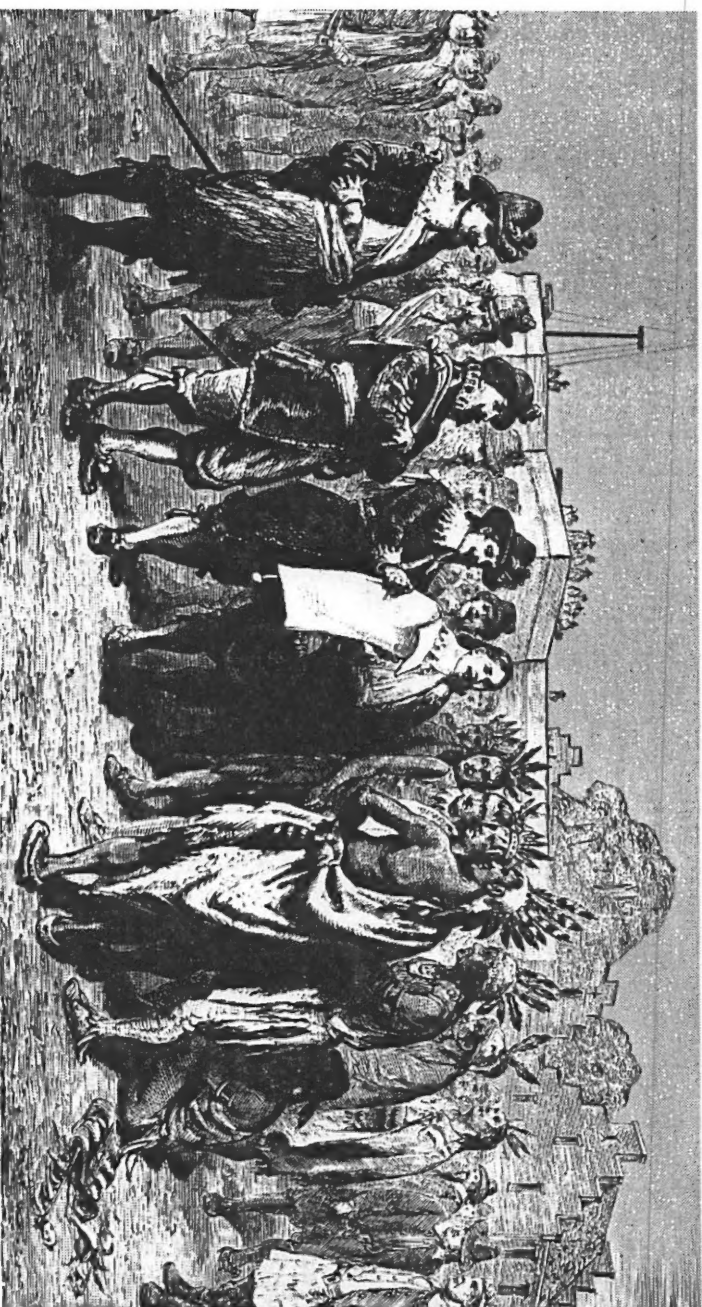
The [redacted] group is a [redacted] organization that has been active in the [redacted] area. The group has been active in the [redacted] area since [redacted] and has been active in the [redacted] area since [redacted]. The group has been active in the [redacted] area since [redacted] and has been active in the [redacted] area since [redacted]. The group has been active in the [redacted] area since [redacted] and has been active in the [redacted] area since [redacted].

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An Indian Treaty was made by Peter Minuit at Fort Amsterdam. Today, this little trading post is the metropolis of New York City. The walls of the old fort are responsible for the name of the world-famous financial center—Wall Street.

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